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CITY OF TORONTO
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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May 31, 1984

To: Neighbourhoods Committee

Subject: Preliminary Report: Outreach and Rehabilitation Services to Prostitutes and Youth on the Street.

Origin: City Council, July 11, 1983. (c71nhc84018(176)

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Comments:

1. Background

On July 11, 1983, City Council requested the Commissioner of Planning and Development to report on the following recommendation of the Bureau of Municipal Research from its report (dated February, 1983) entitled Street Prostitution in our Cities:

> "Municipally supported outreach programmes aimed at rehabilitation should be established which assist people on the street in using existing vocational training, educational upgrading and job counselling services. As well, municipalities should financially support the services performed by many volunteer groups in counselling and establishing drop-in centres and hostels for prostitutes and youth."

This is one of the more unusual requests made of my staff in recent times.

The research undertaken for this report includes:

- a review of the submissions made to City Council in 1983 on the topic of street soliciting;
- familiarization with ongoing work in the area by higher levels of government;
- a review of the literature available on the topic through bookstores and the Metro Toronto Reference Library; and,
- a small number of private discussions between Planning staff and women involved in prostitution and with staff in related social service agencies.

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The literature available, almost all of which has been produced in the United States or Great Britain, provides considerable information on what kind of background most prostitutes come from and on the emotional and psychological damage which is created by the lifestyle/business of prostitution.

In relation to determining the appropriate design and implementation of services for prostitutes, or people about to become prostitutes, this information is highly relevant.

However, of even greater relevance in terms of provision of successful services, is further study and analysis of the precise factors involved in a person's decision to take his/her first step into the world of prostitution. The literature search has revealed very little information on this topic. Yet, it seems to be the crux of the matter; only by undoing those circumstances can successful rehabilitation and reintegration be achieved.

What can be found in the literature is a number of personal accounts of this moment and, by contrast, a personal account of a woman who considered becoming a prostitute and did not. A bibliography has been attached (see Appendix A).

Much of the information available focusses on adult women and, thus, the bulk of this report focusses on this segment of the prostitution population.

Due to the generality of the request, I have:

- made the assumption that the reference to "youth on the street" pertains to those youth who could likely become prostitutes due to their circumstances, or already are prostitutes; and,

- chosen to present what is conventionally available in terms of information on the topic rather than engage in an extensive study including a large number of interviews.

This report, then, is basically a background document on prostitution with emphasis on adult females in "the life" and, when possible, discussion of juveniles, adult males, and the particular situation here in the City of Toronto. At the end of the report, I have provided optional recommendations to assist City Council in making a decision about the appropriateness and extent of further work on this issue.

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2. The Role of the Municipality in Social Services

The City of Toronto has a limited mandate to provide social services. Most such activity entered into by the municipal corporation is through grants to community organizations and agencies, or direct-line service through the Departments of Public Health and Parks and Recreation. Nonetheless, in the current climate of social service fiscal restraint and increasing degrees of social problems, the City government, traditionally most responsive to local problems, has undertaken an increasing responsibility in this area.

Specifically in relation to prostitution, two questions present themselves immediately.

. How many prostitutes and youth on the street actually want to change their lifestyle and means of income?

Although numbers cannot be given due to the lack of empirical research on prostitution in the City of Toronto, it is clear, both from interviews, and the literature review, that the following types of street people would be willing to make use of a rehabilitation and reintegration programme if it were properly designed:

- juveniles (particularly those who are true runaways and have no contact with home);
- females who are just beginning as prostitutes;
- women with children provided their economic and day care needs can be met;
- those who , for whatever reasons, cannot get the necessary level of business to make the danger and pain of prostitution worthwhile; and,
- possibly some adult males in the upper age range for this type of prostitute (age 24 years approximately).

. What is the motivation on society's part for providing services specifically for prostitutes and youth on the street?

In the context of the July 11, 1983, City Council meeting, it would appear that there is a hope that the rehabilitation of these people will aid efforts to rid the City of the nuisance of street soliciting. This possible line of reasoning is erroneous; providing services to the adult and juvenile population involved in street soliciting will not solve the problem of prostitution on the streets of the City. Based on

all the literature available, it is quite clear that, should all street prostitution be eliminated in the City of Toronto through reforming the individuals currently involved, there would be a whole new group of people engaged in "the life" on the City's streets within weeks.*

Thus, the decision to assist in the development and funding of services to rehabilitate those in "the life", and reintegrate them into mainstream society, will require considerable commitment on the part of government officials and elected representatives. This commitment must be given based on wishing to improve the living conditions of disadvantaged people rather than hoping that the provision of these services will solve the problems of street solicitation. There is no doubt, however, that appropriately designed services would be well utilized.

In this context, it is clear that the City has little real mandate or responsibility to work in this area. The line of responsibility is much more clearly at higher levels of government, beginning with Metropolitan Toronto. However, most of the problems in Metro are in the City. If City Council wants to address this matter in a serious, constructive manner, then it should, at the very least, encourage higher levels of government to consider new approaches to the issues presented here.

* In fact, the inconveniences and difficulties experienced by the rest of the City's population would likely multiply as the new prostitutes learned the unwritten rules which allow them to continue doing their work, e.g., what the law says; how the law can/cannot be enforced; relationships with police, commercial and residential neighbours and hotel management; discreet public locations (to avoid a bawdy house charge); territorial disputes between pimps and between the working girls and youth themselves.

3. The Prostitute, the Pimp and the Lifestyle

There are four distinct types of prostitutes: juvenile females, juvenile males, adult females and adult males. (Some male prostitutes are transvestites.) The terms juvenile and adult are used here to describe the age of the individual at the time of entering the life.

Juvenile males appear to have much in common with adult males, except for the added vulnerability caused by their juvenile (usually truant or runaway) status. Juvenile and adult females share much in common, with juvenile females being the most vulnerable of all types of prostitutes.

What follows is a review of the literature pertaining to prostitutes; in specific, their backgrounds, family history, working conditions, etc. It must be recognized that most of this information is drawn from U.S. or U.K. sources as little factual information is available on the situation in Canada. However, some concrete information on Vancouver is available. I have relied heavily on those sources, as well as interviews conducted by staff, for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of information presented in this report. It is possible that some hard data will emerge during the public hearings and deliberations of the (Fraser) Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution. However, this is not a explictedly mandated part of the Federal Committee's terms of reference.

In a more positive vein, when the report of the Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children and Youth (chaired by Dr. Robin F. Badgley) is available later this year, it will contain some hard data. This Committee was struck in 1981 and mandated jointly by the Ministers of Justice and Health and Welfare to "examine the relationships between the enforcement of the law and other mechanisms used by the community to protect children and youth from sexual abuse and exploitation". To this end, the Badgley Committee has conducted interviews with more than two hundred youth involved in prostitution in Canada's major urban centres. A large number of these interviews were done here in Toronto with the assistance of the Metropolitan Toronto Police. A summary of the observations and conclusions drawn from these interviews will be contained in the Committee's report which is to be tabled before the relevant Ministers within a few months.

3.1 A Profile of Adult Female Prostitutes:

In respect of adult females, on whom most literature focuses, the following characteristics appear to be common:

- The majority of "working girls" come from unsettled or non-existent (i.e., foster home, institutional, etc.) home environments.

- Many prostitutes suffered traumatizing sexual experiences prior to entering the life. The most common experiences were childhood sexual abuse or rape at an older age. These are crimes in which the victim commonly blames herself, despite the fact that these are experiences over which the individual woman usually has no control. Thus, many "working girls" may perceive themselves as sexually debased and/or promiscuous before they enter the life.

- Few prostitutes have finished school or have training to find a job in today's employment market. Some take the purely pragmatic approach to prostitution that it is the only job a healthy, hardy, unskilled female can get in which she can earn decent wages. (This perspective on the part of a woman could easily be compared to a young man taking on hard, dangerous manual labour, such as mining, in which the qualities of muscle power and "guts" are rewarded with decent wages.)

- Economics is a key factor in choosing prostitution as a means of livelihood. It pays well.

- The average age for entering the life is 17 or 18 years old, although anywhere between 15 and 22 appears common.

- A significant number of adult female prostitutes have children; some enter the life specifically to support their children.

- The U.S. literature indicates that a disproportionately high ratio of prostitutes are of minority ethnic origin. This is attributed to the lack of alternative educational and employment opportunities for minority ethnic women based on disadvantaged socioeconomic circumstances and racism. It does not appear that Toronto has such a high proportion of minority ethnic women involved in prostitution. Nonetheless, the racist attitudes prevalent in society are reportedly manifest in another regard vis a vis Toronto's prostitute population. It has been stated that minority ethnic women working as prostitutes in the City can expect to earn approximately half what a white prostitute earns per "trick".

- Many prostitutes consider their business a useful service and take some degree of pride in providing that service in a straight-forward and equitable manner.

- Shoplifting and other relatively minor forms of theft are the frequent resort of prostitutes when business is slow or prostitution-related arrests are heavy.

- Drug and/or alcohol abuse is very common among prostitutes. Prostitution is the only line of work, other than high-value theft, available to an unskilled person which provides a sufficient income to support drug addiction. There is a particular type of prostitute termed the "whore-addict" by Gail Sheehy. However, as Sheehy comments, "A persistent myth about prostitution is that most girls are addicts". The demands of the lifestyle/business/pimps are so high that an addict cannot do well in the life for long. Notwithstanding this, there is a high and prevelant level of abuse of both alcohol and drugs among prostitutes. Most personal accounts attribute this to being a means of blocking out the pain, (sometimes) guilt, and the lack of future experienced by women in the industry.

- Many arrests involving prostitutes are for theft or drug-related charges rather than offences related specifically to prostitution.

3.2 The Pimp:

Prostitutes who work independently, which is the minority of those involved in street solicitation in the City, suffer much less in the life than those who work for a pimp. Why, then, do prostitutes work for pimps? Through research and interviews conducted by staff, the following key elements in the prostitute/pimp relationship can be identified:

- The only person the prostitute can be herself with is the pimp. As discussed in Section 5, the stigma on prostitution in our society causes her to feel like a "freak" around anyone else. The pimp, at the very least, knows she is a prostitute and does not expect her to be anything but that.

- The pimp offers some protection to the prostitute; not, however, in respect of dangers she may encounter while on the job (interaction with police or client brutality). The pimp will assist in arranging bail and gathering money for fines (which the prostitute has to earn back eventually anyway); he will make arrangements for her children if the prostitute is arrested, hospitalized or otherwise disappears for a period of

time; and, he will protect her (actually himself) from rip-offs within the world of prostitution.

- The pimp also sets expectations for the prostitute. Many women working for pimps express some satisfaction with this aspect of the pimp/prostitute relationship. For example, the pimp will expect one of his girls to be out on the street by a certain time and to bring home a set amount of money. The lifestyle of prostitution is such that there is little compulsory discipline, and very little established routine. This quality is compounded by the fact that relatively few prostitutes seem to feel capable of planning for the future (unless they have children). Thus, the pimp provides the structure and requirements for performance which the vast majority of the working force in society gets through foremen and other managers. As many prostitutes engage in alcohol and/or drug abuse, they may well require some additional form of management to keep them organized enough to earn a living.

These are some of the things a prostitute gets from a pimp. In addition, she usually gets harsh, and often brutal, treatment when she does not deliver to the set expectations. Because she is engaged in an illegal activity, and because she is emotionally dependent on the types of support the pimp does provide, she usually bears the brunt of whatever ill treatment he gives her without much complaint.

"Pimp", by definition in the business, is someone who keeps more than one girl in his "stable". A man who lives with (and off) just one prostitute is considered a "boyfriend" even though his behaviour and function may be almost identical to the pimp. Generally, however, it appears that the boyfriend/prostitute relationship does not normally include the same level of physical and mental cruelty as does the pimp/prostitute relationship.

3.3 Types of Prostitutes:

"There is probably no (other) vocation which operates with such a fierce system of social distinctions," to quote Gail Sheehy again. "The street-walker has nothing but slurs for 'those lazy flat-backers', meaning call-girls. The call-girl expresses contempt for the 'ignorant street hooker'. The madam wouldn't be caught dead with a 'diseased' street girl. The independent call-girl has washed her hands of the 'bloodsucking' madam or pimp. And so on. The street-hooker is at the bottom of the blue-collar end of the ladder. She far outnumbers everyone else in the business." To this list can be added many other types of prostitutes: women working in those massage parlours and escort services which offer additional services; international playgirls; hostesses in certain exclusive clubs.

But, this report is primarily concerned with what Sheehy has correctly identified as the working girl at the bottom of the ladder: the street prostitute. Most of these women also work in hotels, particularly in the winter, and may do stags and other indoor activities but the bulk of their earnings come from offering their bodies for sexual purposes in public places.

Of particular relevance to this study is the apparent addition of a large number of working street girls from one source in Toronto in recent years. Historically, strippers and hookers have seen themselves as worlds apart. The stripper's self-image is primarily as an entertainer. Women employed in the sex industry reported during conversations with staff that an increasing number of strippers are now prostituting themselves to earn a living.

These women comment that the number of clubs in the Metro area has declined from about 250 to approximately 60 in the past few years and attribute this decline to the advent of licensing clubs which feature strippers. Small clubs and bars which offered "go-go dancers" have been forced out of the business due to the high cost of licensing. It is the street perception that many of the remaining clubs are owned by a relatively small group of organized entrepreneurs.

In recent years, strippers' wages have dropped dramatically and working conditions have gotten much worse. Women employed in the industry attribute this to: a) the oligopoly control of licensed clubs; b) the large supply of potential labour due to closures; and c) socioeconomic conditions in the nation. Most women supplement their wages by table-dancing initally (dancing in a G-string at the customers' tables for tips which are tucked into the G-string); and then, perhaps because the line between stripping and prostitution has already been obscurred (by these intermediate form of soliciting and by removal from the stage) move into prostitution to make ends meet.

3.4 The Adult Male Prostitute:

There is very little available literature on male prostitution. What is available confirms the information gathered by my staff from private discussions and media reports.

- The vast majority of male prostitutes provide sexual services to other men.

- Male prostitutes do not suffer the same stigma as female prostitutes, perhaps because society does not have the same negative view of a promiscuous male as it has of a promiscuous female. As stigma associated with homosexuality has declined markedly, many male "hustlers" now feel quite free to declare

that they are prostitutes. This contrasts markedly with almost all female prostitutes who would never, except in prison, freely admit that they were prostitutes to anyone.

- Most male prostitutes are young (under age 25). Concomitantly, the male prostitute usually views prostitution as a transitional activity from which he will retire to do other things.

- Through staff interviews, it would appear that men do not earn as much money as women prostitutes.

- Very few, if any, adult male prostitutes have pimps (perhaps because they do not need the same degree of psychological support and protection).

Jeremy Sandford, in his book Prostitutes, dedicates a short chapter to male prostitution. He interviewed an adult male prostitute who claimed to be involved in both homosexual and heterosexual prostitution. The interviewee's comments indicate that his line of work was a matter of choice based on his constant desire for sex. Although generalizations cannot be based on one interview, this man appeared to feel in control of his life and expressed his firm belief that he would leave the prostitution business within a few years. Even as one account, this contrasts greatly with all similar accounts available from female prostitutes: uniformly women in "the life" express tremendous vulnerability, lack of control over their lives, and no real sense that they could leave prostitution to do anything else.

Sandford does comment that the extent of male heterosexual prostitution appears to be increasing, particularly in some European countries. This increase may be related to a successful tourist industry.

From what can be determined therefore, the problems encountered by the male prostitutes are not nearly as severe as those suffered by the male and female juveniles or the adult female prostitutes. Nonetheless, the problems encountered by male prostitutes which might lead them to wish to rehabilitate themselves and get out of "the life" are similar to those encountered by women in the life.

3.5 The Juvenile Prostitute:

The juvenile prostitute is legally underage for any type of sexual activity. Little is known about precisely why these youth turn to prostitution although research, media reports and personal interviews indicate the following:

- A large number are runaways.
- They come from home situations which they view to be intolerable.
- Some are as young as twelve or thirteen years of age.
- Although engaging in a very 'adult-type' activity, most are quite naive and unworldly and, as such, are easy prey for pimps and other adults who exploit them far more than the lifestyle/business of prostitution would do on its own.
- Because of the illegality of prostitution combined with their illegal status as runaway juveniles, they are particularly isolated from conventional sources of social service.
- Notwithstanding the above, a sizeable number (particularly juvenile males) are suburban or exurban 'weekend' prostitutes, returning to the family home on irregular occasions for clean clothes, a warm bed and good food.

The best source of information I have been able to obtain is by Trudee Able-Paterson entitled Children of the Evening. Peterson, who was an adult prostitute for a number of years, quit the life and eventually found employment at a crisis-intervention centre for teenagers in New York City's Times Square. A large number of the boys and girls who sought refuge at the centre each night were involved in prostitution.

While Peterson worked mainly with girls (partly her choice and partly because more females are engaged in prostitution), she also worked with boys. One of the boys discussed in her book entered the business because he had been ostracized by his middle-class family for developing homosexual interests. His father stopped speaking to him; his mother arranged therapy sessions with a psychiatrist. The male psychiatrist seduced/raped the youth. Family tensions grew worse, and the youth ran away from home arriving in New York City with no means of support.

Writing about a young girl who had been murdered by a "trick", Peterson says:

> "'She never had a choice! Her life was all arranged, a big ... mess she inherited! ... We've got to have a long-term shelter for those girls. Zack, she would have stayed with me, I know she would have!'
>
> "'It's not your fault Trudee. We aren't a long-term facility.'
>
> "'Yes it is, the fault is mine and yours and everyone's! We can't pretend to treat these girls by putting Band-Aids on big, gaping wounds ...'"

Thus, in addition to providing fascinating and horrendous case histories, the author reveals her first-hand frustration at not being able to adequately meet the needs of the children and youth she counselled.

> "They came to the centre in search of food, shelter, medical care, clothing. But most of all, they were in search of caring. Sometimes when I came home, I would lie awake thinking about the children ..."

Peterson also carefully depicts the complexities of attempting long-term care for juvenile prostitutes. Not only do they require immediate assistance in breaking with the pimp and a supportive living situation, but they have grown accustomed to a lifestyle which has significantly changed their characters. After but a few months on the street, it is no longer possible for the boy or girl to adapt to conventional schools, group home rules or family structures. Many are dependent on drugs; traumatized by bitter experiences; accustomed to the stimulating, spontaneous nature of street life; distrustful of all adults; and, in many cases, they have incorporated into their self-images that they are criminals and/or deviants.

4. The Business of Prostitution

4.1 The Clients:

Individuals with knowledge in the area (i.e., prostitutes and social service workers), as well as other sources, indicate that the clients of prostitutes are men from all walks of life, age groups and income levels.

Authors Vern and Bonnie Bullough in An Illustrated Social History of Prostitution have synthesized Kinsey's research on prostitutes' clientele as follows:

> "In 1947 Alfred C. Kinsey and his associates reported that 69 per cent of the men in his sample of white males had some experience with prostitutes, although only 15 per cent visited prostitutes on anything like a regular basis and contacts with prostitutes represented only 3.5 to 4 per cent of their total sexual outlet. The largest proportion of the regular users were bachelors, divorcees, and widowers. Significantly, however, Kinsey reported that there was a generational difference in contacts with prostitutes, and the young male at the time he was writing made only two-thirds or half as many contacts as the older generation did at the same period in their lives. Other studies tend to verify this generational difference, and the explanation for this is not difficult: Kinsey attributed it to an increase in intercourse with girls who were not prostitutes.
>
> "Kinsey's findings emphasized what in our opinion are the two most significant factors relating to the decline in prostitution, namely, the development of effective contraception and the current sexual revolution, both of which have seriously undermined the double standard."

I cannot comment on whether the use of prostitutes is declining. The "street" perception in Toronto is that prostitution, particularly juvenile and male prostitution, has increased in recent years. The lack of available data on the situation in Toronto hinders any specific discussion on this point.

4.2 The Prostitute/Client Relationship:

To quote again from the authors Bullough:

> "The focus of prostitution seems related to the traditional dominance of men over women. The various expressions of this dominance include the conceptualization of women as property, the double

> standard and the belief that the sexual needs of the male are the only sexual desires that need to be given serious consideration.
>
> "If this hypothesis is accepted, then prostitution can be seen as a symptom of the victimization of women or, in the case of the male homosexual prostitutes, the victimization of the surrogates who take the role of women."

The quote leads to the controversial issue of whether or not prostitutes are victims; this issue can be viewed from several perspectives, and is dealt with in more detail in Section 5 of this report.

Based on interviews conducted by staff and the literature review, there are several key elements in the prostitute/"trick" relationship, excluding the obvious sex-for-money exchange.

For the extreme novice prostitute, and for the very young in the life, "psychic" exploitation is a significant dimension. To quote from "J" in Millett's Prostitutes: A Quartet for Female Voices:

> "... What they're buying, in a way, is power. You're supposed to please them. They can tell you what to do and you're supposed to please them, follow orders. Even in the case of masochists who like to follow orders themselves, you're still following his order to give him orders ...
>
> "The worst part about prostitution is that you're not obliged to sell sex only, but your humanity ... what you're selling is your human dignity. Not really so much in bed, but in accepting the agreement - in becoming a bought person. When I really felt like a whore was when I had to talk to them ... Because (for example) when they talk about "niggers", you've just got to go "uh-huh, uh-huh" and agree ...That's when I really felt that I was a whore. That's the most humiliating thing - having to agree with them all the time because you're bought. That's why it's not as easy as just saying 'prostitution is selling a service'. That's why it's selling your soul ..."

Clients can be brutal with prostitutes. (Of course, prostitutes working for pimps deal on a daily basis with the threat and/or reality of brutality. The literature from other urban centres, including Vancouver, also reports incidents of police brutality, or harrassment which can be abated through providing sexual favours; the extent of this problem in Toronto is not known.)

Despite these other realities brutality of prostitutes by clients is a real problem. In Monique Layton's paper on Prostitution in Vancouver 1973-75, she comments quite simply that:

> "Most of the (prostitutes interviewed) said they were often beaten and robbed by their customers."

Because of the stigma associated with being a prostitute, prostitutes do not normally report these incidents.

Finally, the prostitute/client relationship has one other notable dimension. Referring to prostitution as "a symptom of the victimization and subordination of women", the authors Bullough then go on to comment:

> "At the same time, prostitution becomes an outstanding example of the perverse resilience of human beings, since women, including prostitutes, have turned their sexual subordination into a weapon that allows them in turn to victimize men."

Women employed in the industry have reported a cognitive awareness of this particular phenomena during staff interviews, and this is substantiated by the literature. For example, few prostitutes would pay for sex themselves and usually regard people who buy sex as misfits.

During the course of researching for this report, staff met with five strippers. One of them commented that she couldn't understand why women engaged in the sex industry were popularly considered victims. By stripping on the stage and capitalizing in an explicit monetary fashion on men's sexual desires, she saw herself controlling the men and in the advantaged position.

Prostitutes express a similar view of their work, although not so succinctly. A recurrent theme in the literature is:

> "The difference between being a prostitute and being a wife is the security a wife's got. But it's also the difference in having a lot of men versus having just one. If you have a lot of men - like if you have ten a day - then you're not dependent on any one of them."

4.3 The Money:

In her Issues Paper: Prostitution, prepared for the Law Reform Commission of Canada (July, 1983), Ann Rounthwaite comments, "within each group there are different degrees of sophistication and income, determined by the prostitute and his or her working environment rather than by the method of obtaining customers."

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I have attached (Appendix "B") a table from her report which shows three distinct levels of sophistication (in terms of prostitute and environment) and the range of cost per "trick". This information was extracted by Rounthwaite from a 1975 Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit Report on Prostitution in B.C. I have not found comparable data for Toronto. Nonetheless, interviews with a limited number of people employed in the industry indicate the following:

- The range of cost per "trick" in Toronto at the present time is $10-$150.

- The lower range is attributed partly to the influx of new prostitutes from three sources: runaway or truant youth; women formerly employed in other aspects of the sex industry (notably strippers); and, the national economic/unemployment situation.

- The upper range is attributed to inflation and a perceived increase in the number of international conventions, etc., held in Toronto.

One, apparently typical, prostitute reported to my staff that she currently earns about $2,000 a month. She has no pimp, but provides support for her boyfriend who only works occasionally. She reached Grade 12 in a vocational programme and held a number of short-term jobs in sales and unskilled clerical work prior to entering "the life". In her first year (age approximately 21 years) she reports having earned approximately $50,000 a year. Now at age 25, she reports earning between $20,000 and $25,000 a year.

4.4 The Benefits of Prostitution for the Prostitute:

What has not been mentioned so far is the attractive aspects of prostitution for prostitutes. Many accounts suggest that the following constitute the positive elements:

- As already mentioned, the money.

- The glamour of being successful, acquiring posessions and living very well for however long it lasts until the negative aspects of the life dull this glamour.

- The lack of a boss on the job, i.e. the self-employed nature of the work. Although those working for pimps do report to managers, the "boss" in this situation is not examining the quality of the prostitute's work, only the income derived from it.

- The lack of red tape, taxes, etc.

- The simplicity of the work and, as mentioned earlier, the sense that prostitution is a socially useful service when provided in an equitable and straightforward manner.

- As many prostitutes already feel alienated from mainstream society due to earlier experiences, there is the satisfaction of living a 'deviant' lifestyle in which there is no victim.

5. "We are Freaks": Designing Appropriate Services

In the previous sections, considerable information has been presented about prostitutes and prostitution. However, in order to design and implement services which can be successful at rehabilitation (i.e., retraining and reintegration into mainstream society) of prostitutes, service providers and funders must understand how the prostitute views herself and her situation.

Furthermore, in relation to designing services which are appropriate both for people just entering "the life" and for those who have established themselves but wish to quit, it is necessary to look at the self-image and circumstances of the prostitute at both these points in time.

5.1 Why Do Some Women Become Prostitutes and Others Do Not?:

As the authors Bullough comment:

> "Undoubtedly poor living conditions, unhealthy neighbourhoods and neglected homes, inadequate education, low levels of intelligence, ignorance of sexual matters or too-early sexual experience, and a whole combination of personal and environmental factors are found in the backgrounds of a great many prostitutes. The remarkable factor is not that women with such backgrounds become prostitutes but that so many from the same background do not."

The emphasis is mine; the literature search and staff discussions with women in the business transformed this passing comment into a focal point for further analysis.

Phrased in a different way:

What are the particular circumstances in a person's life which cause that person to make the decision to sell her/his body for sexual purposes to a stranger?

Given all society's injunctions against this behaviour, lifestyle and business, what dynamics in a person's life cause them to take this step? Several elements can be identified which appear to be common in the many accounts reviewed by my staff:

- a lack of money in hand at that particular time;
- a firm belief that other than prostitution, there is no realistic or attainable way of getting sufficient money on which to live (the perception of 'sufficient' is, of course, very individual and subjective);

- the feeling of already having been debased or degraded on a sexual basis;

- sufficient alienation from mainstream society to be willing to accept the stigma of being a prostitute (if s/he enters 'the life' voluntarily and not under coercement); and,

- having a 'connection' into the business.

These constitute the fundamental dynamics which must be reversed, through the provision of social services, if there is serious commitment to assisting prostitutes with rehabilitation and reintegration to mainstream society.

First, however, each of these points bears further examination.

It is quite common for people to find themselves without any money at a particular point in time.

It is not very difficult to figure out how to get a "connection" into the business if the other preconditions are there in a person's life. (Although the literature indicates that, for the faint-hearted, the lack of a known, accessible "connection" to ease the entry into "the life" may be what discourages them.)

The other three points bear further discussion.

5.2 Employment Opportunities and Income Potential:

There can be little doubt that prostitution pays better than other means of employment available to unskilled women and youth. (As most male prostitutes tend to leave the life in their early twenties, they, as well as the juveniles, would be considered youth in the employment market.)

The official unemployment rate for youth in Canada at the time of writing this report is 18 per cent. This means about one in five youth cannot find work. It has been documented by various non-governmental organizations that such statistics do not necessarily reflect the true proportion of all people out of work. For example, some indicies do not tally discouraged workers (those who have stopped looking for work) and/or those who have never formally entered the labour force (eg., a girl who dropped out of school due to pregnancy, has never collected Unemployment Insurance, etc., but has since not been able to find a job). Therefore, the real unemployment rate among youth may be even higher than 18 per cent.

Even for adults, unemployment is high. Furthermore, people appear to be staying unemployed longer, as those who are employed appear to have become less mobile, i.e., are staying in their job because unemployment is high and the economy is uncertain.

Young workers are paid less than older workers, if employed.

Women are paid less than men in the labour force. I have attached (Appendix "C") three charts provided by the Ontario Government Women's Bureau which indicate the earning power of women relative to men. These charts show, among other things, that:

- In 1981, the average earnings for full-year working women in Canada was $13,177; for men it was $22,181; and, thusly, women averaged 59.4 per cent of what men earned.

- In 1981, 28.5 per cent of families with a female head-of-household had an income of under $11,000; for families with a male head-of-household, 5 per cent had an income under $11,000.

- In 1981, full-time female workers earned 63 per cent of what full-time male workers earned in Ontario. This compares with 59.9 per cent in 1971 (i.e., a 3.1 per cent improved differential in ten years).

Thus, statistical evidence appears to bear out the notion in the minds of people about to become prostitutes that prostitution is possibly the only economically viable alternative in terms of employment offering decent wages. (As discussed in Section 4.4, it does pay fairly well and some aspects of the working conditions are good: no set hours, no boss while on the job, no taxes, no red tape, etc.) If services are to be successful at rehabilitating prostitutes, then the educational upgrading, retraining and employment component must be geared towards dealing with these problems in an effective and realistic manner.

5.3 Sexual Debasement or Degradation:

Having accepted that the economic argument in favour of becoming a prostitute has validity, the fundamental question resurfaces and can be rephrased: <u>What distinguishes those disadvantaged people who become prostitutes from those who do not?</u>

Throughout this study one factor kept surfacing: almost all these women reported experiencing sexual abuse or assault prior to entering "the life". It is my hypothesis that prior sexual debasement or degradation is an essential precondition to sexually prostituting oneself. However, this debasement or degradation may have been experienced on an emotional or psychic level; it need

not have been a physical attack. A full understanding of this dynamic is critical to understanding the prostitute's problems and personality so that appropriate services can be designed and implemented.

To quote from a footnote of Susan Brownmiller's in her book (on rape) entitled Against Our Will:

> "Psychiatric case studies of prostitutes unearth accounts of childhood rape or molestation by relatives with stunning regularity, but although these cases have been reported individually, no serious study of the prostitute has tried to put together any statistical evidence."

The literature review for this report backs up this statement. Not only is there a lack of scientific research on this point, but there is no serious analysis of its relevance, despite the "stunning regularity" of its occurrence. (Those studies which have been done on childhood sexual abuse indicate that approximately 80 per cent of female prostitutes were victims.)

Brownmiller continues:

> "A recent interview with a New York pimp who prided himself on his stable of teenage runaways contained the quote, 'The majority of girls I've gotten so far got raped by their fathers or uncles or somebody'. Pimps, who are acknowledged experts in the field of female psychology... understand that rape is the fastest way to 'turn out' a likely teen-age candidate, and they have been known to set up intricate gang-rape situations when they have spotted a prospect, as a sort of good business practice."

The literature is full of these accounts. The runaway youth or totally impoverished adult is picked up by a man who takes her home, feeds her, buys her some nice clothes, and then rapes her, beats her up and sends her out on the street to work for him. Alternatively, as mentioned above, she was sexually abused as a child, or raped at an older age prior to entering "the life".

The fact that these accounts occur with such a "stunning regularity" must mean something. The lack of "serious study" could be an indicator of society's double-standard attitude towards prostitution. There appears to be little desire to analyse society's responsibility in creating the prostitute.

As Kate Millett says:

> "One is slowly forced to realize that for centuries a tremendous moral and sociological confusion has surrounded the entire issue (of prostitution), a phenomenum one can account for only by considering the monumental sex repression within our culture, and it's (society's) steady inability, after having created both the prostitute and her plight, to recognize her as human in any meaningful sense at all."

In context, Millett appears to be referring to two types of sexual repression:

- that which convolutes the expression of healthy sexual attitudes, values and behaviour between men and women in our society; and,

- that which has placed women-as-a-whole in a dependent or unequal position vis-a-vis men in society-at-large;

because Millett goes on to say:

> "The smug stupidity with which people are accustomed to discuss this subject is fairly outrageous: the victim, the prostitute, rather than the institution which victimizes her, is condemned."

Millett identifies patriarchal society as "the institution" which victimizes the prostitute and all women to some extent. She identifies some of the pertinent values and practises of society as follows:

> "Prostitution is regarded as humourous, inevitable or convenient; the prostitute is derided, castigated, or pharasaically informed that her situation is of her own choosing and 'her own fault'. As the causes of prostitution lie in the economic position of women, together with the psychological damage inflicted upon them through the system of sex-role conditioning in patriarchal society, this conventional satisfaction with the prostitute's fate is not only unjust, but simplistic."

The "sex-role conditioning" females receive in this society is far too large a topic to deal with in the context of this report. Nonetheless, it is particularly relevant to the topic of this report and will be discussed briefly.

First, to take the example most relevant to this discussion: despite the much publicized "sexual revolution", society continues to view a promiscuous male and promiscuous female in two very different ways. Earlier in the report this was discussed in terms of the distinction between the self-image of the male and female prostitute.

Secondly, what can be found in the backgrounds of women who became prostitutes, but had not been physically assaulted, is that they had experienced at least one striking psychic assault which was sexually degrading prior to entering "the life". During the research for this report only three such instances (of absence of physical assault) were clearly identified. In each of these, the woman was accused, falsely, by the man to whom she looked for approval (another example of "sex-role conditioning") of being promiscuous. In one case it was the father; in another the husband; and, in the third, a boyfriend.

From these instances, it can be concluded that, for a woman, sexual debasement or degradation is a continuum, beginning with her inequality or dependent position in society, and continuing along until it reaches a subjectively-experienced critical mass, at which point that woman has lost her self-esteem.

Thus, it is logical to speculate that a female prostitute must have already incorporated into her self-image the notion that she is sexually debased (e.g., promiscuous or a "bad" girl) (i.e., already a prostitute) before she actually turns her first trick. However, the lack of serious study in this area means that this conclusion can only be offered as a hypothesis: to confirm or dispell, and to determine whether in some regard it may also apply to juvenile and/or adult males involved in prostitution. If serious study confirms that prior degradation on a sexual basis (viewed as a subjectively experienced continuum) is an intrinsic factor in enabling a person to prostitute herself (himself), this problem must be addressed in rehabilitation services.

5.4 "We Are Freaks":

A woman involved in street soliciting made this comment during a private discussion which constituted part of the research for this report. She was describing how the rest of the world views her. Other women (the straights: married and single women who are not prostitutes) look down on her. She would never admit in their company to being a prostitute. The men who use her services often look down on her; all the while they are paying her relatively well to do what she does. The police look down on her, and yet, she reports, will stop harrassment or overlook flagrant soliciting, at times, for favours. Society says she is a criminal. She has no one in whom she can confide; no one with

whom to share her fears, isolation, miseries. No one could possibly have been through the same life experiences as her; therefore, no one can understand or truly empathize with her situation. Other prostitutes are competition; on the street they refer to each other as "bitches".

She, in common with other women who have been employed in the sex industry, reports that she has tried to use a therapist to help her improve her self-image. Specifically, she said she needs to work out the psychological problems she developed during her childhood which may have been partially responsible for her making that decision to become a prostitute. She claims, as do other women in "the life", that she was an object of study and interest to the therapist. She felt like a fascinating new animal in a zoo. She feels that the only way she could get useful therapy is through a self-help group guided by an exceptional type of female counsellor.

5.5 Alienation and Stigma:

In respect of alienation, it is fairly widely accepted by criminologists, sociologists, social workers, and others in related fields, that persons who enter into a deviant quasi-legal or illegal lifestyle feel themselves to be "alienated" from mainstream society. For prostitutes, this is particularly true. The emotional and physical poverty of the backgrounds of many prostitutes would likely predispose tnem to this state of alienation. Society has not delivered for them, why should they join forces with society? The debasement (founded on sexuality and sex-roles), which they all appear to have experienced, would further reinforce this feeling of alienation. And, once in "the life", being a prostitute would mean further debasement, alienation and stigma. This is discussed immediately above.

This whole description and analysis has been presented wthout reference to one of the critical issues related to prostitution: the dilemma concerning its appropriate status in law. That issue is not the subject of this report. However, it must be recognized that, because prostitution is illegal, the stigma, alienation, and potential for further debasement of the person who is a prostitute is geometrically increased. It is because of the illegal status of the profession that she requires a pimp who is often such a brutal and debilitating influence on her life. It also means that her children are likely to suffer neglect, just as she has, because she will likely be arrested and sentenced at least once in her life. There are many other ways in which the illegality of prostitution worsens the situation for the prostitute, but that is sufficient for illustrative purposes.

Therefore, once rehabilitation has been effected (in particular in relation to employment and income potential and to the person's self-esteem), reintegration is still an issue. Many of the key ingredients for successful services identified in the conclusion relate to this question of reintegration.

6. Conclusion:

This report has presented an overview of prostitution and in that context has provided a preliminary discussion on the following issues:

- Who are prostitutes, and what is prostitution like?

- Would the provision of social services, intended to rehabilitate and reintegrate prostitutes with mainstream society, be productive?

- Does the City of Toronto have a role in developing, funding and/or providing these social services for prostitutes?

- What causes a person to become a prostitute? Conversely, what problems must be eliminated from a person's life in order to successfully remove her or him from the business/lifestyle of prostitution?

It is clear from the literature available, as well as other sources, that the prostitute with the greatest vulnerability and most problems is the juvenile female. It is less clear, but likely, that the type of prostitute who suffers least in "the life" is the adult male. The adult female and juvenile male appear to rank in the middle.

There are a number of points in the life of a prostitute when s/he would likely be ready to leave "the life": these were identified in Section 2. The material presented in this report permits the identification of the key ingredients which must be included in a successful rehabilitation and reintegration social service package. These include:

1. "safe houses" (hostels, shelters, etc.) which provide support and assistance in breaking with the pimp, madam, boyfriend, and/or other friends in "the life";

2. provision of family, family-type, or other personal support systems;

3. alcohol and drug withdrawal programmes;

4. educational upgrading and retraining programmes which are aimed at areas of employment where there is good potential for getting a job and in which the wages are decent;

5. counselling to deal with low self-esteem, stigma and alienation related to such factors as:

   - childhood sexual abuse;
   - childhood neglect;
   - rape and other sexual assault;
   - sexual repression and sex-role conditioning; and,
   - the self-image of being/having been a prostitute;

6. parenting skills and support systems, including day care; and,

7. assistance in developing the necessary life skills to look for work and carry out a future life in another business/lifestyle.

The manner in which these services are to be provided (i.e., outreach, location, programme design, etc.) has not been the subject of this report. It seemed premature to comment on these matters at this time. In addition, this topic requires further research related to the situation found in the City of Toronto in specific. However, the comments of women who have tried to use social services must be borne in mind. Section 5.4 provided a glimpse of social services from the prostitute's perspective.

As mentioned earlier in this report, I am providing City Council with optional recommendations in respect of this issue.

Recommendation No. 1 relates specifically to the issue that provision of such services is not directly mandated to the City of Toronto, within the current governmental context.

Recommendation No. 2 outlines the approach which could be taken towards doing further work in this area, should City Council deem this appropriate. It relates specifically with the point raised at the end of Section 2 that City Council could usefully direct its efforts towards encouraging higher levels of government to consider new approaches to the provision of services for juvenile and adult prostitutes. The decision to approve this recommendation would be based on the recognition that: the vast majority of street solicitation in Metro occurs in the City; the lowest levels of government are traditionally most responsive to social issues and problems; and, Metropolitan Toronto government is mandated to provide social services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That City Council consider and receive this report.

2. That City Council request the Metropolitan Toronto Council Executive Committee Subcommittee to Respond to Issues Involved in the Prevention of Youth Prostitution and Other Problems Related to Prostitution to form a working committee on social services for juveniles, youth and women employed in the sex industry under the following terms:

   a) the mandate of the working committee shall be to undertake further research and consultation to develop proposals for appropriate social services for the target population in the City of Toronto;

   b) these proposals would be directed towards the levels of government responsible for providing social services;

   c) the composition of the working committee would include social service staff (eg., from the Elizabeth Fry Society, the Inner City Youth Programme, the Young Women's Christian Association), representation from the City of Toronto Local Board of Health, and staff from relevant departments, including the City Planning and Development Department, the City Department of Public Health and the Metropolitan Toronto Community Services Department, as well as people engaged in street solicitation and other aspects of the sex industry in the City of Toronto;

   d) the working committee shall liaise with regional representatives of: the (Badgley) Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children and Youth and the (Fraser) Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution; or, their appropriate mandating ministries; during the course of its research and consultation period;

e) additional resources required by the working committee be made available by Metropolitan Toronto Council; and

f) the working committee shall present its report, upon completion, to both City Council and Metropolitan Toronto Council.

Stephen G. McLaughlin,
Commissioner.

AP/lw/nbg

APPENDIX A

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N.B.: These are the books and papers used directly for this report. The Metro Reference Library has additional titles which staff reviewed but did not draw upon heavily.

APPENDIX B

Source: Issues Paper: Prostitution; Ann Rounthwaite, B.A., L.L.B.; prepared for the Law Reform Commission of Canada, July 1983. Data extracted by Rounthwaite for a 1975 Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit Report on Prostitution in B.C.

ECONOMIC SCALE (1975 prices in Vancouver)	"STREET WALKERS"	MASSAGE PARLOURS, BODY PAINTING, NUDE PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIOS, STEAM BATHS	ESCORT SERVICES "CALL GIRLS"
$60 - $100	- night clubs, cabarets, hotels (women & men including transvestites)	- private clubs (women & men)	- escort and dating services - people working in apartments & penthouses (women & men)
$40 - $60	- hotels, pubs (women & men including transvestites	- sophisticated facilities (women & men)	
$20 - $40	- downtown streets, skid row, docks (women, men, & juveniles)	- "rundown" massage (women & men)	- "beeper girls" (those who work with an answering service and a pager)

APPENDIX C

Average Earnings of Full-Year Workers
by Occupation and Sex,
Canada, 1981

	MALE	FEMALE	FEMALE AS % OF MALE
Managerial	$31,138	$17,566	56.4%
Professional	27,834	17,393	62.5%
Clerical	19,938	12,711	63.8%
Sales	19,694	10,434	53.0%
Service	16,956	8,935	52.7%
Farming, etc.	13,928	7,319	52.5%
Processing and Machining	21,430	11,558	53.9%
Product Fabrication, etc.	20,481	11,485	56.1%
Construction	22,353	n/a	n/a
Transportation, etc.	20,577	11,888	57.8%
All Occupations	22,181	13,177	59.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. Income Distribution by Size for Canada, 1981 (Catalogue 13-207 Annual).

Ontario Government Women's Bureau
September 1983

Percentage Distribution of Families
by Income Group and Sex of Head
Canada, 1981

Income Group	Male Head	Female Head
Under $11,000	5.0%	28.5%
$11,000 - $19,999	16.9%	34.6%
$20,000 - $29,999	25.6%	19.2%
$30,000 and over	52.6%	17.7%

Source: Statistics Canada. Income Distribution by Size in Canada 1981 (Catalogue 13-207)

Ontario Government Women's Bureau
October 1983

Percentage Distribution of Earners by Earnings Groups, Average Earnings, Medium Earnings and Average Earnings of Full-time Workers, by Sex, Ontario, 1981 and 1971

	1981		1971	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Under $10,000	56.7%	29.5%	97.2%	75.0%
$10,000-$14,999	20.5%	12.0%	2.0%	18.9%
$15,000 and Over	22.9%	58.7%	0.6%	6.2%
$15,000-$19,999	12.0%	16.2%	—	—
$20,000-$29,999	8.5%	26.5%	—	—
$30,000 and Over	2.4%	16.0%	—	—
Average Earnings	$ 9,767	$18,418	$3,499	$7,646
Medium Earnings	$ 8,419	$17,665	$3,106	$7,365
Average Earnings of Full-Time Workers	$14,682	$23,305	$5,553	$9,273
Average Earnings of Female Full-Time Workers as % Male	63.0%		59.9%	

Source: Statistics Canada Earnings of Men and Women. Selected Years 1967 to 1979 (Catalogue No. 13-577 Occasional).

Statistics Canada, "Earnings of Men and Women, 1981" unpublished report, August 1983.

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October 1983